

# Wyoming Tribune-Eagle

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By Baylle Davis

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**C**ancer is something that is just a part of our lives these days, Gov. Dave Freudenthal said at the annual Celebration of

Hope cancer awareness event Friday.

But it also is something that people don't tend to think about until it has touched them somehow, he added.

"All of a sudden, (a warning) goes from a nice message to a

harsh reality," Freudenthal said.

That's why programs to raise awareness, do screenings and prevent chronic illness are so important, he added.

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From the Front

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## Cancer: Girl, 5, was among the survivors in attendance

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Freudenthal got enthusiastic applause from the audience of health-care providers, policy-makers, cancer patients and survivors at the Capitol rotunda Friday when he announced that he had quit using chewing tobacco.

Yellow daffodils, which symbolize hope, were on display in the rotunda, where the cancer advocates gathered to listen to

speakers for the news conference.

Chronic, non-communicable diseases such as cancer account for 60 percent of deaths annually in the state, Wyoming Department of Health Director Dr. Brent Sherard said, which is higher than the national average.

"So much of this disease is preventable," he added.

People would be surprised how long they can stay healthy

if they eat right, exercise and not use tobacco, Sherard said later.

But thanks in part to organizations like the Wyoming Comprehensive Cancer Control Consortium and Jason's Friends Foundation that help cancer patients and their families, "We have more cancer survivors in Wyoming than ever before," said Kimberly Rugers, WCCCC program manager.

"We suffered a little bit of a defeat yesterday," said Ameri-

can Cancer Society national representative Carter Steger, referring to a failed bill that would have established a statewide ban on smoking indoors. "But we're making progress on the local level. I do believe we will see success in Wyoming."

One cancer survivor who attended the event was 5-year-old Haiden Wiggins, who was diagnosed with Ewing's Sarcoma, a bone cancer in her spine, and spent about a year at The Chil-

dren's Hospital in Aurora, Colo.

Today she is cancer free.

She visits kids at The Children's Hospital and wants to be a doctor and a nurse when she grows up.

She presented a vase of daffodils to Sherard, who has been active and influential in cancer awareness.

At the event Friday, the normal, healthy girl crawled up and down the steps at the Capitol with her younger brother, pes-

tering her mom for McDonald's.

Heather Wiggins, Haiden's mother, said the Jason's Friends Foundation helped her family financially while her daughter was sick.

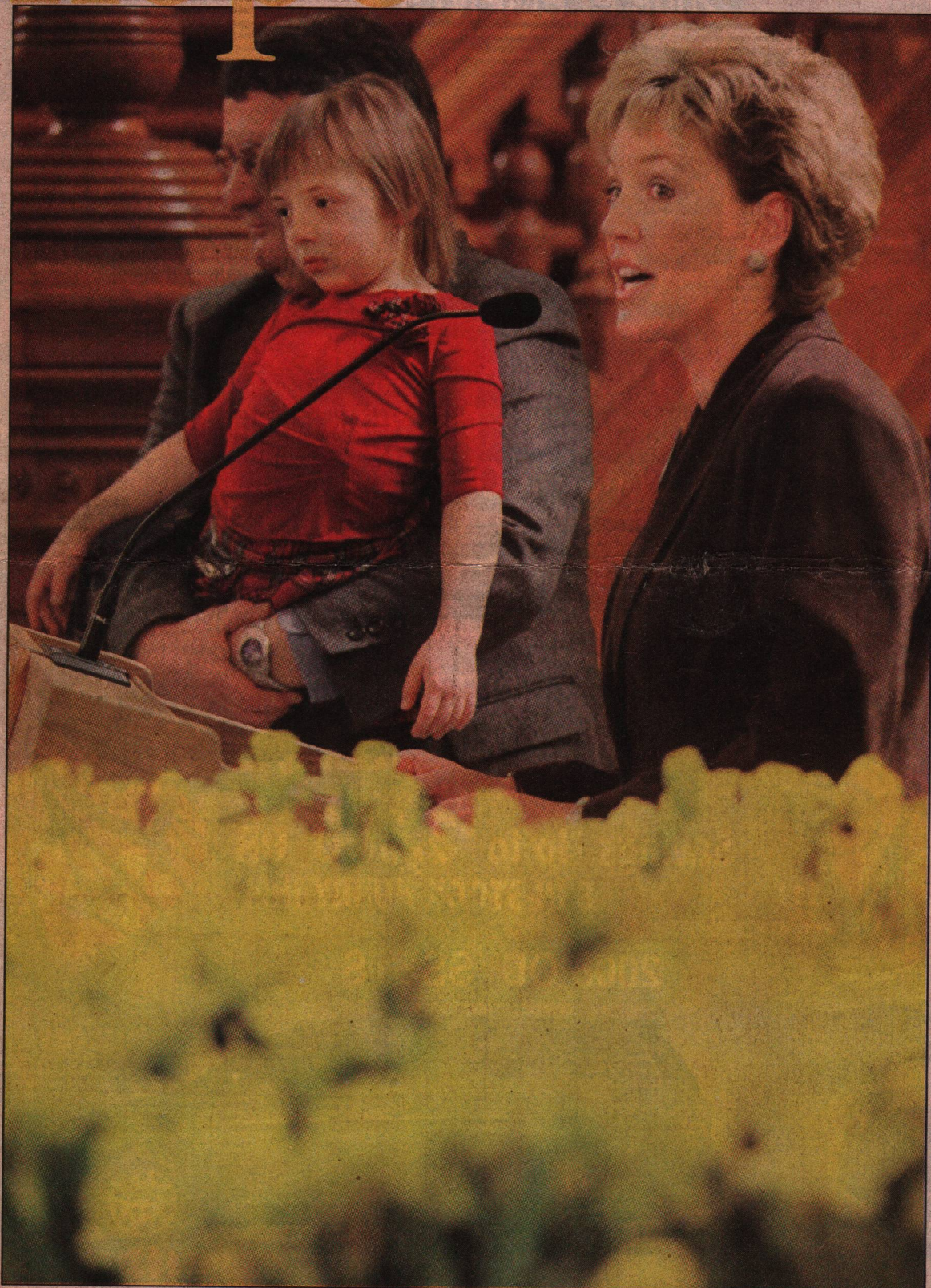
"We probably would have lost our house without them," she said. "They're just angels."

Rugers said the event gets bigger every year. For the first one three years ago, 30 people attended. Friday, they had 77 registered participants.



# hope

cancer survivors and advocates  
tell Wyoming's stories of success



**LARRY BRINLEE/WTE**  
Lisa Eades of the Jason's Friends Foundation, right, introduces 5-year-old Haiden Wiggins to those gathered to mark the third annual Celebration of Hope in the Capitol rotunda Friday in Cheyenne. Haiden was introduced as a success story, as she is now cancer-free from the Ewing's sarcoma that she suffered from earlier.